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CYBERTHON

A 24-Hour Adventure In Virtual Reality

What Is Cyberthon?

Cyberthon is the name of an event the Whole Earth Institute is hosting for 24 hours from noon on October 6th to noon on October 7th, 1990 at Colossal Pictures in San Francisco. This event will focus on the cultural and social impact of Virtual Reality.

What is Virtual Reality?

According to Howard Rheingold, author of Tools for Thought, "Virtual Reality is the name for a new science and technology that is emerging worldwide. Head-mounted visual displays create the illusion of immersion in a computer simulated world, and special sensor-equipped gloves makes it possible to manipulate simulated objects by direct contact. Head-tracking devices enable the computer to update the world model, thus making it possible to navigate and explore the three-dimensional models known as virtual worlds. The technology already is used for scientific visualization, architectural design, and medical imaging. Future uses include advanced computer interfaces and communication technologies. Research is actively moving forward at NASA, the University of North Carolina, MIT and MIT Media Lab, and scores of other sites in the U.S., Japan and Europe."

How will Cyberthon be different from other Virtual Reality Conferences?

As stated above, Cyberthon will focus not on the technological advances in this field, but on the cultural and social impact of Virtual Reality. People from diverse backgrounds will get some hands-on experience with various forms of Virtual Reality and then be given the opportunity to think of how this innovative technology may impact their lives and culture in the foreseeable future.

Is this going to be a 24-hour conference?

This conference will run for 24 hours from Saturday October 6th to Sunday October 7th at the Colossal Pictures studios in San Francisco. Adding to the general ambience of virtual reality, the conference will follow a "Club Med" format -- e.g. once a visitor has paid his/her admission price no other exchange of money will occur.

To effectively, and magically, combine hands-on-demonstrations of Virtual Reality as it exists now with discussions on what turns it might take, activity will take place in two distinct areas throughout the 24 hour period. One of these areas will be a maze where real and virtual worlds are intertwined and the other space where speeches, group discussions and activities will be scheduled throughout.

To Cherie
From Kelly

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What kind of things are going to happen in the maze?

A partial list of the activities the visitor will encounter, and can partake in or just watch, throughout the maze includes the following:

- hands-on experience with VPL, Autodesk and/or Sense8 equipment
- demonstrations of other novel V.R.-related technology such as those created by Michael Naimark and Chris Hardman
- entertainment by magicians, storytellers and other live performers
- films and videos about, and using, V.R.
- an opportunity to actually "build" a world (and maybe win a contest)
- innovative V.R. games which can be played to your heart's content

What kind of things are going to happen in the other area?

In the smaller area key speakers will talk about different aspects and applications of V.R., there will be group discussions and also group activities. A preliminary schedule for this area, which will change as our participant list grows. is as follows:

Before printing any of this, please check w/ Cherie Nash at our office to confirm. Also, she has other names which may be more specifically targeted to MULTIMEDIA

1:30 p.m.	Keynote Address (possibly by Dr. Marvin Minsky)
3:30 p.m.	The Human Interface - by Wendy Kellogg
5:30 p.m.	Industrial applications of V.R.
7:30 p.m.	Tactile Feedback Forum
9:00 p.m.	Discussion on the Social & Cultural Implications of V.R. (moderated by Howard Rheingold)
10:30 p.m.	Discussion on the Social & Cultural Implications of V.R. - Part 2
midnight	Jaron Lanier meets the Critics
2:00 a.m.	Live Performance ~~(perhaps Penn & Teller)~~
4:00 a.m.	Live Group Experience (possibly an Antenna Theater audio tour)
6:00 a.m.	Live Group Experience - part 2
8:00 a.m.	Observations from V.R. Drama Experiment by Brenda Laurel - pending
11:00 a.m.	Closing Address and presentation of the "Build Your Own World" contest awards

Who is going to participate in this event?

As of now Jaron Lanier, Eric Gullichsen, Margaret Minsky, Chris Hardman, Michael Naimark, Wendy Kellogg, William and Meredith Bricken, Tom Furness, VPL Research, Autodesk, Sense8, Broderbund, and Antenna Theater have already committed to participating in the event. Marvin Minksy, Max Behensky, Randy Farmer, Steve Arnold, Warren Franklin, Lucas Films, Scott Foster, Beth Wenzel, Steven Beck, Louis Brill, + Brenda Laurel, Kathelin Hoffman and Stephanie Sutton have all expressed a strong interest in doing likewise.

The Cyberthon Steering Committee has compiled a comprehensive list of people and companies who are going to be invited to participate (see attached list). While some of these are indeed involved with Virtual Reality -- like Dr. Marvin Minsky of the Media Lab, Warren Robinett of UNC and Tom Furness of the University of Washington -- others are being asked because they are involved with creating alternative realities -- like story tellers, magicians and actors -- or because of their interest in V R and how it can affect their future.

limited to 10. + [illegible].

Post mail on [illegible]

6 INVITED

Sally Tisdale - Esquire yes (PR) interviews + photos.

Jon Carroll Chron yes ← a blank letter, then an article?

⇓

motivate ventures?

Mike Miller WSJ Hop.

John Markoff NY Times ?

~~Philip DeWitt~~ Time ~~DC~~

Jeanne McDowell

SF/Chron/Exam - big writer.
before + after
BIZ COLUMN GUY.

1 official photographer } going
1 " film company } ok?

Bob Guccione

Up to - date data base - on going afterwards.

CROWD CONTROL

Crashing problem - pre-event coverage

x What do we get out of it?

How do we prevent? Price too high - pissed off -

→ re: our strategy.

HOURS
FOOD

KO. training